

South Dakota National Guard

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SD National Guard welcomes 7 new Army lieutenants

RAPID CITY, S.D. – The South Dakota National Guard welcomed seven of the Army’s newest officers to its ranks following a commissioning ceremony at Camp Rapid, Aug. 18.

The ceremony marks the end of Officer Candidate School - the first step in officer training and development – and the beginning of their careers as commissioned officers.

“Today’s ceremony marks the culmination of three very intense phases of training that has prepared these officer candidates for the next step in their military career, the profession of a commissioned officer,” said Lt. Col. Wyatt Hansen, commander of 1st Battalion, 196th Regiment (Regional Training Institute), the SD Army National Guard battalion responsible for conducting OCS.

OCS is taught in a high-stress environment, where candidates are tested academically and physically, both in the classroom and in field environments. Training consists of 16-18 months of drill weekends and two two-week training periods.

The commissioning ceremony included several customs and traditions such as the second lieutenants taking the Oath of Office, being pinned with their new rank and receiving their first salute. The evening’s guest speaker was Brig. Gen. Kevin Griesse, assistant adjutant general of the SDARNG.

“Today you enter one of the most prestigious, challenging and rewarding roles within our nation - that of a commissioned officer,” Griesse said to the lieutenants. “It is quite honorable that you have all either enlisted or re-enlisted in the military during a time in which our country is at war. It is even more admirable you have decided to pursue a commission and continue your military service in the officer corps.”

The lieutenants will next attend Basic Officer Leader Course, which focuses on their branch-specific training, such as engineering, field artillery and signal.

“Soon you will be entrusted with our nation’s most precious resource – America’s sons and daughters,” Griesse said. “It will be your privilege to lead them. It will be your responsibility to take care of them. Lead well.”

The second lieutenants of OCS Class 61, their hometowns, and South Dakota Army National Guard assigned units are:

Second Lt. Ariel Delgado, Sioux Falls, 153rd Forward Support Company
Second Lt. Mitchell Demers, Winner, 211th Engineer Company
Second Lt. Haley Derr, Caputa, 842nd Engineer Company
Second Lt. Michael Hill, Aberdeen, B Battery, 1/147th Field Artillery Battalion
Second Lt. Aaron Johnson, Sioux Falls, 115th Signal Company

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Second Lt. Dexter Mehlhaf, Vermillion, B Battery, 1/147th Field Artillery Battalion
Second Lt. Andreau Miller, Mitchell, B Company, 139th Brigade Support Battalion

Concluding the commissioning ceremony, several awards were presented to include:

- Second Lt. Andreau Miller received the Endeavor Award for demonstrating the highest degree of consistent advancement, perseverance and devotion to duty during the training year.
- Second Lt. Mitchell Demers earned the Academic Excellence Award by attaining the highest academic rating for the school year.
- Second Lt. Ariel Delgado earned the Leadership Excellence Award for attaining the highest leadership evaluations during the training year.
- Second Lt. Haley Derr earned the Army Physical Fitness Award for scoring the highest on the Army Physical Fitness Test as well as the Erickson Trophy, awarded to the OCS graduate with the highest combined overall standing in leadership evaluations, academics, physical fitness and peer evaluations.
- The Battalion Leadership Award was presented to SDARNG's 153rd Engineer Battalion for the greatest number of officers commissioning from Officer Candidate School.

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High resolution photos are available at www.flickr.com/photos/southdakotationalguard



170818-Z-FO377-0011: U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Kevin Griese, assistant adjutant general of the South Dakota Army National Guard, administers the Oath of Office to seven newly commissioned second lieutenants during a commissioning ceremony at Camp Rapid, Rapid City, S.D., Aug. 18, 2017. The newly commissioned officers will be assigned to National Guard units across South Dakota. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Capt. Chad Carlson)



170818-Z-FO377-0020: U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Andreau Miller is pinned by his son, Jude, and father, Daniel during a commissioning ceremony at Camp Rapid, Rapid City, S.D., Aug. 18, 2017. Miller is one of seven newly commissioned officers who will be assigned to National Guard units across South Dakota. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Capt. Chad Carlson)



170818-Z-FO377-0007: U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Dexter Mehlhaf, left, receives his first salute as an officer from his brother, Staff Sgt. Derrick Mehlhaf, during a commissioning ceremony at Camp Rapid, Rapid City, S.D., Aug. 18, 2017. Melhalf is one of seven newly commissioned officers who will be assigned to National Guard units across South Dakota. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Capt. Chad Carlson)



170818-Z-FO377-0001: U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Aaron Johnson is pinned by his mother, Donna, during a commissioning ceremony at Camp Rapid, Rapid City, S.D., Aug. 18, 2017. Johnson is one of seven newly commissioned officers who will be assigned to National Guard units across South Dakota. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Capt. Chad Carlson)

FOR MORE INFORMATION, please contact the SDNG Public Affairs Office at (605) 737-6721 or e-mail ng.sd.sdarng.list.pao@mail.mil